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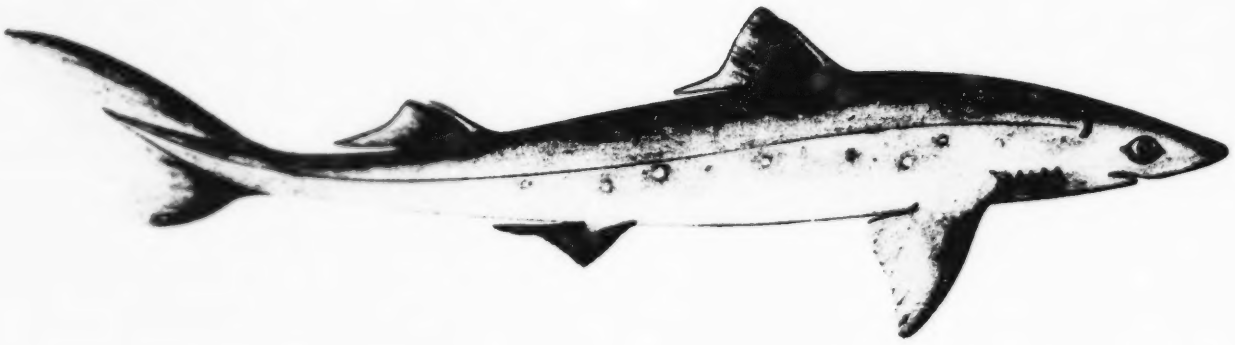
GOVERNMENT OF NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR
DEPARTMENT OF FISHERIES

DOGFISH FISHERY DEVELOPMENTS IN NEWFOUNDLAND DURING 1980 AND 1981

(A two section report)



DEVELOPMENT BRANCH REPORT NO. 27

JUNE 1982

DOGFISH FISHERY DEVELOPMENTS

IN

NEWFOUNDLAND DURING 1980 AND 1981

(A two section report)

BY

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FISHING OPERATIONS UNIT, DEVELOPMENT BRANCH

DEPARTMENT OF FISHERIES

ST. JOHN'S, NEWFOUNDLAND

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
List of Tables	i
INTRODUCTION	1
DEVELOPMENT PROJECT OUTLINE	2
Data Collection	2
Technical Assistance	2
Quality Assessment	3
FISHING ACTIVITIES, 1980	4
Hermitage Bay	5
Burin Peninsula	6
Placentia Bay (Head of Bay)	7
Placentia Bay (Argentia - Merasheen Areas)	8
St. Mary's Bay Area	8
Onboard Handling and Processing	9
Fishing Gear	10
Exploratory Fishing - Placentia Bay	10
Workshops	11
Laboratory Quality Grading of Dogfish	11
Product Yield	12
MARKETING	15
Marketing Difficulties	15
Marketing Review	16
Outlook for 1981	19
SUMMARY	21
REFERENCES	23
APPENDIX	

SECTION I

DOGFISH FISHERY - 1980

LIST OF TABLES

Page

TABLE 1: Total dogfish landings in Newfoundland, 1980..... 5

TABLE 2: Flesh colour of dogfish backs after being held in storage for 2 weeks..... 13

TABLE 3: Product yield from sample of dogfish taken from Placentia Bay, 1980..... 14

INTRODUCTION

The dogfish (Squalus acanthias) made its usual appearance along the South coast of Newfoundland during 1980 and for the third consecutive year, this species was harvested and exported to the overseas market. Early in the season it was evident that many fishermen were looking forward to a successful fishery; however, labour-management difficulties decreased production.

It is difficult to predict when and for what duration dogfish will make their appearance. In recent years they have been found in commercial quantities along the South coast, primarily in Placentia and Fortune Bays where they may remain in a particular bay or inlet anywhere from several days to several months. In areas where the stay is only brief, dogfish have little economic inpact on the local economy; however, where the stay is prolonged, the impact is more pronounced. Since it is generally acknowledged that dogfish drive away other species and ruin fixed gear, fishermen, in these circumstances, have welcomed the opportunity to sell rather than discard dogfish.

In 1980, the Department continued to focus its attention towards quality improvement through workshops and seminars and to investigate tolerance levels of dogfish to varies storage environments prior to processing.

This report reviews the Department's involvement in the Newfoundland dogfish fishery and identifies areas of possible concern to facilitate its ongoing development.

DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM OUTLINE

The 1980 Dogfish Development Program involved a continuation of the program initiated in 1978 to utilize this resource as fully as possible. These efforts concentrated on: (1) defining the resource through exploratory surveys and from data obtained from various fishing centers; (2) providing technical and marketing information to fishermen and processors; and (3) examining the present fishing techniques with a view to quality improvement.

1. Data Collection

Twenty communities extending from St. Mary's Bay to Hermitage were selected and in each of these communities a contact person reported, on a weekly basis, information pertaining to the dogfish fishery. Vessel owners, particularly those fishing inshore, were requested to notify the Department if any dogfish were taken.

2. Technical Assistance

Regular visits were made to centers involved in the dogfish fishery where catching, unloading and processing procedures were observed. Information relating to those procedures were given out where necessary.

The Department financially supported a representative from Food Technology Division of the College of Fisheries to visit the United Kingdom to report on processing techniques employed in that country and to review the European marketing situation.

3. Quality Assessment

Arrangements were made with a local fisherman in Placentia Bay to take a quantity of dogfish for delivery to the College of Fisheries laboratory in St. John's. There, Departmental personnel, in co-operation with the College of Fisheries, examined the fish for quality deterioration over a seven day period. Each day several samples were examined externally then processed into "backs" and "flaps". These were then checked for odour, colour change and defects. The purpose of the exercise was to determine the rate of deterioration of dogfish (round, throatcut, bobtailed and gutted) stored for varying periods after being discharged from the boat and placed in storage on ice.

FISHING ACTIVITIES, 1980

Dogfish production commenced in 1978 and annual landings and landed values over the 1978-1980 period were as follows:

	andings(kg)	value($)
1978	76,360	17,250
1979	1,318,000	240,467
1980	635,465	102,248

Following limited commercial activity in 1978 to determine if the product offered European market potential, landings increased greatly in 1979 and supplemented income of fishermen in St. Mary's, Placentia and Fortune Bays. The landed price per pound to fishermen was consistent in all areas at eight(8) cents per pound (round). The market remained strong and the outlook appeared good for the coming year.

Throughout the 1980 season, dogfish appeared to be as plentiful as the year previous, however, restrictions imposed by the plants on purchases resulted in reduced landings. Another factor which discouraged fishermen in pursuing this fishery was the fluctuation in price. In one of the major producing areas of Placentia Bay, plants reduced their price to fishermen from 8 cents (round to 5 cents and finally to 4 cents. The main areas of activity in 1980 were Placentia, Fortune and Hermitage Bays and landings by area are given in Table 1. Seven companies were involved in dogfish processing, however, two of these companies processed only minor quantities.

Hermitage Bay

Fishermen reported dogfish to be plentiful on occasions and were taken by longline from June 14 to October 4th. The cod fishery in this area is usually very successful and fishermen generally prefer to pursue this fishery as opposed to diversifying into other activities such as the lumpfish and dogfish fishery. Quite often dogfish are taken in their longline fishery and fishermen welcome the opportunity to dispose of the dogfish by-catch.

The labour dispute in July and August curtailed plant production; as a result, only 23,000 kgs of dogfish were processed. A contact person reported that fishermen discarded approximately 68,000 kgs of dogfish as a by-catch, despite the fact that the overall fishing effort was drastically curtailed because of the labour dispute. It was also noted that dogfish remained in the general vicinity of Brunette Island from mid-June to the end of September.

Table 1: Total Dogfish Production in Newfoundland, 1980*

Statistical Areas	Location	Kilograms	Pounds
Area D	Cape Bonavista - Grates Pt.	2,684	5,918
E	Grates Pt. - Cape St. Francis	3,484	7,680
F			
G	Cape Race - Cape St. Mary's	11,206	24,705
H	Cape St. Mary's - Point Crewe	488,483	1,076,910
I	Point Crewe - Pass Is.	119,969	264,483
J	Pass Is. - Cape Ray	9,639	21,251
Totals		635,465	1,400,947

*Although dogfish landings are reported from area D & E, it is important to note that all dogfish were caught from St. Mary's Bay to Hermitage Bay.

Burin Peninsula Area

The inner section of Fortune Bay, which includes Harbour Mille, St. Bernards and Bay L'Argent, reported that dogfish appeared on June 14th but for the first week catches were too low to warrant setting up a collection service to the main plant at Grand Bank. The labour dispute halted activities and when fishing resumed in September, small quantities from St. Bernards were shipped to Grand Bank via the Baine Harbour feeder plant.

There were only occasional reports of dogfish in the St. Lawrence area until the first week in October at which time they were reported to be abundant. Fishermen reported that the local plants were not buying since it was late in the season when fishermen were winding down their fishing activities and that quantities taken would not warrant production.

At Baine Harbour the feeder plant purchased dogfish for transhipment to Grand Bank. These were purchased head on gutted and shipped by truck in insulated containers. Fishermen at nearby Red Harbour reported taking dogfish from June 27th to October 11th, mainly by longline.

Prior to September 10th, the Baine Harbour plant accepted round dogfish. After that date, fishermen were required to gut their fish and received the same price as for the round. The plant required a minimum of 700 kgs to warrant a truck travelling to Grand Bank. Most of the fish are taken by longline which are normally hauled each day, thus assuring a fresh product. After mid-September most of the dogfish processed in Grand Bank originated from Baine Harbour and St. Bernards.

At Fortune, the local plant purchased a limited quantity of round dogfish; however, they could only handle 5,000 kgs per day because of the heavy volume of groundfish. Fishermen were then limited to approximately 200 kgs per boat.

The Grand Bank plant continued to be the major processor on the Burin Peninsula handling catches by local fishermen and also from their feeder plant in the Baine Harbour area. The daily processing capacity was approximately 5,000 - 6,000 kgs daily.

Some difficulty was experienced by the plant with the product received from Baine Harbour. It appeared that fishermen (or the feeder plant) accumulated dogfish over several days to make-up a load and this resulted in fish at the bottom of the container being of poor quality.

Placentia Bay (Head of the Bay)

Dogfish appeared in small numbers from June 15 onward; however, it was not until mid-July that any significant quantities were taken. Again, when the labour disruption occurred, the plants discontinued purchasing fish. Fishermen, using longlines and gillnets during July and August, reported dogfish to be plentiful.

During the latter part of the season, after plants resumed production, one plant purchased up to 16,000 kgs per month head on gutted. A considerable portion originated from the Paradise-Petite Forte area and was delivered to the plant by the collection boat.

Approximate landings from this area were slightly under 70,000 kgs.

Placentia Bay (Argentia - Merasheen Area)

Fishermen fishing out of the St. Brides, Placentia, Fox Harbour and Ship Harbour again landed good catches by gillnets and longline. In St. Brides, the dogfish were plentiful for a brief period in June but did not reappear for the balance of the season. Local fishermen reported them to be the least abundant in 20 years and attributed this situation to the lack of caplin in the area.

In the Fox Harbour - Ship Harbour area, fishermen could catch dogfish from mid-June to the end of September. Several factors, such as (1) the low price (4¢/lb. - round) being offered to the fishermen by one plant, (2) the labour dispute during July and August, and (3) the reluctance of plants to to accept dogfish from fishermen other than those supplying other species, contributed to a low production in this area.

One plant in the area received considerable quantities of dogfish from the longline fleet fishing in the Merasheen area. Several landings had to be dumped due to poor quality. This was attributed to inadequate onboard icing during warm weather conditions. Approximately 36,000 - 40,000 kgs of dogfish were sold to the plants in the Placentia area. This catch would have been much higher had the price and demand been higher.

St. Mary's Bay Area

The Department arranged for a monitoring of dogfish activity in the St. Mary's Bay area, however, none were

reported taken. This was in contrast to 1979 when several feeder plants processed and delivered dogfish to the Argentia plant.

Onboard Handling and Processing

The major portion of the dogfish catch was taken by long-line and gillnet and delivered by boat to the plant or to a discharge wharf where it was placed in insulated containers.

The plants in each area issued instructions to the fishermen on how they wished the fish to be handled. This procedure varied in 1980 since some of the plants had made arrangements to process fins and tails as well as "backs" and belly flaps.

In the area from Gaultois to Burin Peninsula, dogfish were sold bobtailed, except as previously noted, fish in Baine Harbour were gutted during the latter part of the season. In the Southern Harbour - Placentia area, fish were usually delivered to the plant in a round condition.

Several plants which have been processing dogfish since 1978 have set up separate processing lines for this species and have found this to work well, particularly where they process both inshore and offshore groundfish species. Other plants, notably those involved only in inshore production, integrated this species to their regular cutting line since quite often, when dogfish are abundant, other species are scarce.

Fishing Gear

It has been determined that dogfish do considerable damage to certain types of fishing gear. A group of fishermen from Placentia Bay area were interviewed during 1980 and reports received indicated that a gillnet will last approximately two (2) weeks before being too badly damaged to fish.

Longline fishing required that the gangions (lines to which hooks are attached) have to be replaced every 2-3 fishing days.

During the course of exploratory fishing, the Department prepared experimental longlines using swivels on the gangions to prevent the dogfish from twisting gangions up tightly to the groundline. Unsuccessful attempts at locating dogfish during the short survey caused a postponement of experimental fishing until the 1981 season.

Exploratory Fishing - Placentia Bay

Because of the small number of fishermen fishing during the labour dispute, it was difficult to obtain information on dogfish locations. The Department delayed its survey until August 4th and decided at that time to make a short reconaissance survey of an area off Placentia Bay where dogfish had previously been reported.

A 14 meter longliner, M.V. "Patricia and David", equipped with sonar, radar and sounder, conducted exploratory fishing for five (5) days in Placentia Bay during the period August 4 - 10, 1980.

Fishing effort was carried out using jigger, handline and gillnets; however, no dogfish were located.

Workshops

As a follow-up to the U.K. visit by a Food Technologist of the College of Fisheries, a workshop was held in St. John's on July 9 and 10, 1980. The purpose of this gathering was to provide Government personnel and processors involved in the dogfish fishery an opportunity to exchange information and to be briefed by College personnel on processing and marketing of this species in the U.K. Fish samples supplied by the Department were processed into backs and flaps and information passed along to local processors on the type of product required for the European market.

Laboratory Quality Grading of Dogfish

On September 13th., 1980 approximately 200 kgs of freshly caught dogfish were transported in insulated containers from Ship Harbour to St. John's. These fish were subjected to various onboard handling procedures, i.e. either landed round, gutted, bobtailed or throat cut.

The purpose of this exercise was to determine what affect storage of 1-7 days has on the quality of dogfish. It was also felt that any related information on quality would lead to improved fish quality practices in the processing plants.

During each of the seven days, two samples each of round, botailed, bled and gutted fish were inspected externally then processed into backs and flaps and graded.

The results showed that the belly flap of round dogfish even when stored and iced in insulated containers, will become discoloured unless gutted within two (2) days. The flaps of the gutted fish maintained a good appearnace during the holding period. The backs appeared to be of acceptable quality up to the fifth day. After that period, the uniformly reddish colour assumed a whitish grey colouration.

Both backs and flaps were frozen in plate freezers and placed in cold storage until October 3rd. at which time they were visually examined. As expected, there was no noticeable change in the colour of the flaps. All samples of the backs appeared to be in good condition, the difference being in colouration. All samples were placed in four (4) categories of colour, namely light, medium, dark and leached (faded out). Table 2 indicates that the flesh colour in the backs becomes progressively lighter with each day held in insulated containers.

Product Yield

The samples graded on day 6 were also weighed to obtain the ratio of backs and flaps to the whole weight. Because of the small sample (8 fish) involved, the results can serve only as an indication of the yields that may be obtained from dogfish ranging from 1.8 to 5kg. Table 3 shows that the yield (both flaps and backs) is between 47 and 50 percent for round dogfish and 62 percent when gutted.

Table 2: Flesh colour of dogfish backs after being held in cold storage for 2 weeks.

	Numbers of fish designated by day processed			
	Degree of redness			
	Faded	Light	Med.	Dark
Round	7,7	3,4,5	6,6,5,3, 4,2,2,1	1
Bobtailed	7	4,4,5,5, 3,3	6,6,2,2,1	1
Throat Cut	5	5,6,6,4, 3	4,3,2	1,1,2
Gutted		6,6,5,5, 4,4	3,3,2,2	1,1

Note: The numbers shown in each colour category refer to the day that particular fish was processed.

Eg. 7 - a fish held for 7 days prior to processing.

Table 3: Product yield from sample of dogfish taken from Placentia Bay, 1980.

Category	Weight (kg)						
	Whole fish		Backs		Flaps		
	Wt. (Kg)	% Discard	Wt. (Kg)	% of Whole	Wt. (Kg)	% of Whole	Total Product Yield
Round	2.99	55	1.04	35	.29	10	45
	1.72	52	.68	40	.14	8	48
Bobtailed	2.08	50	.82	39	.23	11	50
	1.81	52	.68	38	.18	10	48
Gutted	*1.40	38	.68	49	.18	13	62
	*1.99	38	.95	48	.27	I4	62
Throat Cut	5.17	59	1.58	31	.52	10	41
	1.72	51	.68	40	.16	9	49

*Gutted weight

The product yield is high due to the fish being weighed with gut removed.

MARKETING

Marketing Difficulties

Prior to the 1980 fishing season, processors were optimistic that the market would continue strong. The first indication of a weakened market was received as a result of the visit early in 1980 to the U.K by a Food Technologist from the College of Fisheries. He reported that the U.K. brokers were reducing their inventory from a five month stock to approximately a one month supply. This caused a drop in demand during the summer months (May to October). The market for flaps, destined for the German market, continued strong.

Midway through the season, processors apparently became uneasy over the possibility of being unable to dispose of the backs and began limiting their purchases by: (1) placing a boat quota on the daily purchase; (2) buying only from fishermen landing dogfish as by-catches; and (3) reducing the price per pound to fishermen from 8¢ to as low as 4¢ per pound.

Several processors arranged the sale of all their product by December; however, other processors had the major portion of backs on hand during the early part of 1981. The Department made several contacts with European brokers interested in purchasing this product and passed along this information to the processors. In the meantime, these processors had reduced the major portion of their inventory and felt that the situation was in hand. It was unofficially reported that several shipments were shipped to France.

No report is available on the prices processors received for their product; however, unconfirmed reports indicate that the good prices received for the flaps compensated for the somewhat weakened demand and price of the "backs".

Marketing Review

The initial effort by Newfoundland in 1978-1979 to enter the dogfish fishery was undertaken without a clear appreciation of specific catching and processing methods compatible with European market requirements. At that time, Newfoundland was the only eastern Canadian Province engaged in that fishery and, while the U.S. was exporting considerable quantities to the European market, some quality problems were being experienced. At no time has there been a problem for Newfoundland processors to market belly flaps. A report on the European market compiled for the FIAB* in 1980 stated that a representative of a German company who imports large quantities of dogfish usually imports Canadian and American dogfish flaps but would prefer fresh supplies.

Marketing of backs has been a problem and the future outlook remains uncertain. This product is consumed mainly in the U.K. with smaller quantities going to Franch and Italy. The main market in the U.K is for fresh unfrozen dogfish largely supplied by their own fishermen. Any shortfall is taken up by th the fresh and frozen dogfish from Norway and the frozen product from the U.S. and Canada. The FIAB report further states that Norway has been a major exporter of dogfish, however, landings in 1979 were 35 percent below 1978 and exports of fresh and chilled product from January - May, 1980 were one third less than the same period in 1979. However, there was a 25 percent increase in the average landed value. For frozen dogfish, the drop was 600 tons in the first six months of 1980 compared

*Fishing Industry Advisory Board

to 1979 but the landed price rose 5 percent. U.K. FIshery statistics, obtained by the FIAB, indicate that while 1980 Canadian exports exceeded 1979 exports, the big change in the U.K. market occurred when the U.S. replaced Norway as the major supplier of dogfish to the U.K. market.

January - May

Country of Origin	1979 Tonnes	1980 Tonnes
U.S.	167	355
Norway	380	159
Canada	29	102
France	11	54
Others	3	2

Again referring to the FIAB report on the European market, a member for the Norwegian Institute of Fishing Technology Research was of the opinion that Norwegian dogfish was noticeably superior to Canadian dogfish in terms of quality but, at the moment, markets were being lost because the Norwegian dogfish fishery was unprofitable due to low catches. There was no evident effort by Norway to cut back in response to increased competition from the U.S. and Canada, but simply there was a lack of dogfish to support a good fishery. The report also stated that the U.S. and Canada have increased their share of the French market at the expense of the U.K. and Norway and this has led to a decline in the amount of fresh or chilled product required in this market.

Dogfish production in the Eastern U.S. in 1979 was 5,000 metric tonnes (Dogfish Market Report, 1980), and declined by approximately fifty percent in 1980 according to a U.S. Fisheries Management official. This reduction probably reflected quality problems associated with the 1979 production.

FIAB sources (U.K. Aug., 1980), indicated that American and Canadian product are last in line of preference. Market observations (i.e. U.K.) suggest that the price will not raise substantially but local landings should increase as more boats fish this species. One U.K. broker stated, during his recent visit to Newfoundland, that increased production from Eastern U.S. plants had reduced the demand for frozen dogfish; however, the quality has been questioned by British buyers. This may be reflected in the change in U.S. production previously noted. This broker further stated that the 1980 product from one Newfoundland company was very much in demand and preferred over the U.S. product. There are still some differences in product colour on its arrival in the U.K. This may possibly be caused by inconsistent temperature levels both in plant storage and during shipment to market. He was optimistic about the 1981 marketing outlook and felt that the U.K. could handle reasonable quantities of Newfoundland product.

On the basis of the foregoing information, it appears that, if a reasonably good quality is maintained, Newfoundland dogfish should continue to find outlets in the European market.

It is important, therefore, for industry and government to broaden their knowledge to enable them to produce a quality product with the colouration and texture that will command

the best price. During the past several years the Newfoundland product has been held in local storage for up to six months after processing. This prolonged period may be one of the major factors in colour differences that is reported by U.K. brokers. Federal officials have indicated an interest in contributing to any studies involving quality; this is one area where a joint effort could result in a better product acceptance and greater demand for local dogfish products.

Market Overview During 1981

The market pattern that appears to have emerged over the past several years is that the European market demand during the July - October period is low for the frozen imported dogfish; this being mainly due to the availability of U.K., unfrozen product. This period also coincides with our dogfish fishing season. It appears that processors were reluctant to stockpile large amounts and they reacted by imposing boat quotas and by dropping the price of the landed product. Marketing reports received during the latter part of 1980 confirmed weak markets for dogfish; however, there was no indication of any substantial change in market price to justify a 50 percent reduction in price to fishermen. Information received on 1980 prices paid to fishermen in North American dogfish producing centres showed that fishermen in the U.S. received 8 cents per pound and in B.C. the price was 8.4 cents.

For the first quarter of 1981 the market outlook remained good with the European Weekly Frozen Fish report for April listing the price in the U.K. for frozen U.S. and Canadian

"backs" at 50 cents (U.S.)/lb. and in France 57 cents/lb. The market at that time was quite firm and appeared likely to continue so for the next term. The demand for "flaps" on the German market was high and the price remained over $1.00/lb.

The recently negotiated price of 8 cents per pound gutted may offer little encouragement to fishermen to enter into a directed fishery for this species.

Over the longer term, it is likely that the demand for local production will increase should Norway's production drop and should many U.S. plants discontinue processing this species.

SUMMARY

1. The 1980 Dogfish Development Program concentrated on providing to industry technical assistance to further improve the quality of the Newfoundland product.
2. Dogfish landings in 1980 were 635,465 kg, less than one half the 1979 production.
   Boat quota and reduced prices to fishermen appeared to be the main causes for the reduced landings.
3. Placentia Bay area accounted for over one half of the total production.
4. Handling of dogfish has improved greatly over the past several years with fishermen using insulated containers for shipment to the plants.
5. A 2 day workshop was conducted in July at the College of Fisheries to provide representatives of Industry, Government and College an opportunity to exchange information on various aspects of dogfish fishery.
6. Laboratory tests show that "flaps" of dogfish stored in insulated containers become discoloured within 2 days if not gutted and "backs" of round dogfish are of acceptable quality for 5 days when stored in insulated containers.
7. The product yield is 47-50 percent from round dogfish and 62 percent for gutted based on a sample of 8 fish.
8. Markets were generally weak for dogfish backs in Europe, however, the situation improved in the early part of 1981.

9. Newfoundland dogfish "backs" are reported to vary in colour; this may be attributable to the length of time the product is held in cold storage.

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SECTION II

DOGFISH FISHERY - 1981

(A brief supplement to the 1980 report)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
INTRODUCTION	1
DEVELOPMENT PROJECT OUTLINE	2
Commercial Assessment	2
Quality Enhancement Project	2
RESULTS	4
Commercial Fishery	4
Hermitage Bay	6
Burin Peninsula	6
Placentia Bay (Head of Bay)	7
Placentia Bay (Placentia Area)	7
St. Mary's Bay	8
DISCUSSION	9

INTRODUCTION

The dogfish fishery in Newfoundland is of primary importance to a large number of fishermen on the South coast who, during the past four years, have supplemented their income by harvesting this species. There is still uncertainty both for the fishermen who cannot always rely on the plant to purchase their catch, and for processors who must make a decision on the amount of product to place in storage on speculation of the overseas market.

In 1981, the Department again monitored the harvesting and processing effort and, as well, worked closely with Department of Fisheries and Oceans to promote a high quality product.

This brief supplement to the 1980 report summarizes the activities related to this fishery and the problem areas requiring further attention.

DEVELOPMENT PROJECT OUTLINE

Commercial Assessment

Regular contacts were made with the plants involved in dogfish processing to obtain production figures. Reports were also received from fishermen of activities in communities from St. Mary's Bay to Hermitage Bay.

Dogfish Survey (Proposed)

The purpose of the survey was to:

(1) Conduct trial fishing using modified fishing gear to reduce excessive wear and tear.

(2) Determine the practicality of actively fishing for dogfish using electronic fish finders. This would be a follow up to a brief study conducted in 1979.

(3) Collect and prepare a sample of dogfish for use in a Quality Enhancement Program.

(4) Obtain additional information on abundance of dogfish in Placentia Bay.

Arrangements were made to engage a 15 metre vessel to conduct this study and to collect samples for the quality study.

Quality Enhancement Project (Proposed)

This was planned as a joint effort with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans aimed at determining the improvement in quality resulting from gutting and icing dogfish as soon as they are caught.

A sample of 160 dogfish were required for the test, with 10 fish being processed from each group consisting of round iced and uniced, gutted and iced, and uniced. Processing was scheduled to be conducted at Newfoundland Quick Freeze plant in Jerseyside, Placentia Bay. The fish would then be transported to the Federal Fisheries Laboratory in St. John's for chemical analysis and judging by a taste panel. Dockside grading would be carried out by Inspection personnel immediately on discharging at the wharf.

RESULTS

Commercial Fishery

Dogfish were reported to be in Placentia and Fortune Bays from early June until October. The amounts processed by the various plants involved in this activity are listed below. It should be noted that the amounts processed do not necessarily indicate the abundance since plants often limit the quantity purchased from fishermen. The price paid to fishermen would often dictate the effort expended to catch these fish.

Total Landings By Fishermen -	814,983 (lbs.)	369,676 (kgs.)
Processed - Backs	- 298,980	135,617
- Flaps	- 50,242	22,789
- Tails	- 8,984	4,075
- Liver	- 44,606	20,233

	Weight-kg. (lbs.)					
	Arnold's Cove	Placentia	Dildo	Grand Bank	Gaultois	
Total landings* (round & gutted)	115,668 (255,000)	215,572 (475,247)	17,797 (39,236)	1,587 (3,500)	19,051 (42,000)	369,676 (814,983)
Backs	52,254 (115,200)	71,147 (156,850)	6,320 (13,935)	453 (1,000)	5,443 (12,000)	135,617 (298,980)
Flaps	7,257 (16,000)	9,979 (22,000)	563 (1,242)		453 (1,000)	22,789 (50,242)
Tails	907 (2,000)	2,981 (6,573)	186 (411)			4,075 (8,984)
Liver		19,779 (43,606)	453 (1,000)			20,233 (44,606)

*These landings are based on monthly reports obtained by our field personnel from plants processing dogfish and differ from preliminary D.O.F. stations (543 m.t.). The difference may be accounted for due to dogfish being purchased either round or gutted depending on individual plant requirements.

Hermitage Bay

For as long as local fishermen can recall, dogfish make their annual appearance usually in two "runs". The first run occurs during the caplin period in July and the second occurs in October and november and are found usually in waters 90-100 fathoms deep.

During these periods fishermen try to avoid the dogfish by placing their gear where dogfish are not generally concentrated.

Fishermen welcome the opportunity to engage in a directed fishery for dogfish if they could be assured that the plant would buy all their catch.

The Gaultois plant, operated by the Lake Group, purchased approximately 16,329kgs. of dogfish from local fishermen in the Hermitage - Seal Cove Area. Prices paid to fishermen were 4 cents per pound round (8 cents/pound gutted). Local fishermen reported that the plant accepted a limited amount of dogfish with the sales of other species, but did not encourage directed fishing for this species.

Burin Peninsula

In 1980, the Grand Bank and Fortune fish plants were fairly active in processing dogfish. In 1981, a small quantity was processed in June, however, the closing of the Grand Bank plant in July resulted in no additional dogfish being processed in that area.

Dogfish were reported in the area until late September. Attempts were made to have the dogfish shipped to Placentia, however, fishermen felt that the low price (4 cents/lb. gutted) did not warrant the expenditure involved in catching the fish.

Placentia Bay (Head of the Bay)

The plant at Arnold's Cove purchased dogfish from fishermen in North Harbour, Arnold's Cove and those fishing in Merasheen, Petite Forte and Paradise. Eight cutters were employed in the plant which had a processing capacity of 4,500 kgs. per day. Given such a limitation, there was no guarantee that fishermen in nearby communities such as Little Harbour and Southern Harbour could sell their dogfish.

One fishermen in Little Harbour reported discarding thousands of pounds of dogfish taken in August on longlines. Southern Harbour gillnet fishermen also reported dogfish taken and discarded during the same period.

Fishermen in Fairhaven sold a limited quantity of dogfish to the Placentia plant, however, they had to arrange and cover the cost of transportation to the plant. The low price of 4 cents per pound did not always warrant the time and expense involved in transporting the catch to Placentia.

Placentia Bay (Placentia area)

The Newfoundland Quick Freeze plant at Placentia was the only plant in the area processing dogfish. The main source of supply up to first week in August was the Ship Harbour - Fox Hr. area. Limited quantities were also purchased from Fairhaven.

Dogfish were purchased by the plant at 4 cents per pound round. This enabled the plant to utilize the liver and the tails for which they had acquired a market.

St. Mary's Bay

Reports received from fishermen indicated that dogfish were not found in St. Mary's Bay in commercial quantities during 1981.

DISCUSSION

Landings in 1981 were down compared to the 1980 season even though most of the plants previously involved in the fishery continued to process limited quantities. Dogfish were fairly abundant in Placentia and Fortune Bays, however, the reasons for a production decline can be summarized as follows:

(1) A drop in price paid to fishermen during 1980-81 from 8 cents to 4 cents per pound round.

(2) Only one plant set up separate facilities to process dogfish. This plant closed in July seriously affecting total production of dogfish.

(3) Other plants used groundfish production lines to process dogfish, as a result, during the busy groundfish processing period, dogfish production was limited to approximately 5,000 - 10,000 kgs. per day.

(4) Plants usually only purchased dogfish from fishermen who regularly sold their other fish catches to the plant.

(5) Fishermen were not always sure that the plant could purchase their dogfish.

(6) Low prices received plus the uncertainty in selling their catch discouraged fishermen from actively pursuing the fishery.

(7) Plants apparently did not wish to accumulate a large dogfish inventory in mid-summer unless they could be assured that the market would be strong in the fall.

It appears that the processors involved in the dogfish fishery are not giving the fishery the serious consideration it deserves. Processors by limiting the amounts purchased and paying a low price to the fishermen curtailed production during the summer months, when dogfish were most abundant. Later on in the fall plants attempted to interest the fishermen to resume dogfish fishing, however, because of the lateness of the season & earlier difficulties experienced in disposing of their catch, fishermen were not interested.

As far as can be ascertained, European demand for Newfoundland dogfish was strong and the prices received for the product increased over 1980. It is unfortunate that where the market is strong and the product is readily available, that this Province should lose this source of income mainly because of lack of foresight and planning. This situation has occurred in both 1980 and 1981 and steps should be taken in 1982 to remedy this situation.

POOR

QUALITY

ORIGINAL